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IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
DECORATIVE ARTS

I. AMERICAN DECORATIVE ARTS

AS one of the special features of the Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition, Galleries F 24 and 25 have been rearranged with an exhibit of early American decorative art.

Against the windows of the west wall in Gallery F 24 are cases of Wistarburg glass: in one case, the collection lent by Miss Minnie I. Meacham, which comprises, in many interesting forms, examples from the early, middle, and late periods of the Wistar factory; in the second case, a group of similar glass belonging to the Museum, which supplements Miss Meacham's collection in some respects. Together they form an unusually representative group of this early glass, whose manufacture ceased about 1780.

With the exception of the Wistarburg glass, the general character of the material in the room is that of the period between 1790 and 1815. Against the south wall an interesting group centers around the mantelpiece surmounted by two large Lowestoft urns, lent by Ogden Codman, and a gilt-bronze clock of a type made in France to appeal to patriotic American sentiment. This clock and the card table to the right of the mantelpiece, both lent by R. T. Haines Halsey, present two varieties of the usage of the American eagle in decorative work, while still a third occurs in the pierced brass fender in the fireplace opening. The American eagle and shield appear also upon two Lowestoft urns lent by Mrs. Charles B. Hillhouse.

Two fine pieces from Salem are the Sheraton four-post bedstead against the north wall, and the mahogany chest on chest against the east wall. This latter piece, lent by Mrs. Francis P. Garvan, came from the Elias Hasket Derby house, erected between 1795 and 1798 from designs by Samuel McIntire. Tradition says that this is from McIntire's workshop, but it is doubtful whether he did more than carve the three pediment figures, which are important as early bits of American sculpture. The mirror from the Halsey Collection is inlaid with the unusual design of

the American eagle holding a pole surmounted by a liberty-cap. Other pieces of furniture in the room illustrate various Sheraton types whose popularity is well justified by their beauty of form and skilled craftsmanship.

In the adjoining gallery, F 25, the furniture is largely the work of Duncan Phyfe—the drop-leaf tables lent by Mr. Halsey exhibiting two different treatments of the end supports. The special feature in this gallery is the collection of Lowestoft decorated with the insignia of the Order of the Cincinnati. About 1784, sets of Lowestoft bearing this device were brought from China for three members of the order—General Washington, General Knox, and Captain Shaw. Two of the sets bore the initials of the owners, but that of General Washington was distinguished by the blue border. Examples of these three sets have been brought together, perhaps for the first time since their distribution in 1784; the five pieces from the Shaw set being lent by Mrs. Robert B. Minturn, while the cup and saucer from the Knox set and the pieces from the Washington set have been lent by Mr. Halsey, who has also lent the collection of Lowestoft shown in another case, which comprises pieces decorated with the American eagle in various designs, and with the coat of arms of New York State. The American Sheffield plate teaboard engraved with the Washington arms, and a covered cup with saucer bearing Martha Washington's monogram, both lent by Mr. Halsey, have close historic connection with the Cincinnati china.

In the gallery of American silver, A 22, two special features may be noted. Perhaps historically the most important piece of American silver is the punch bowl, made by Paul Revere. This bowl was made to commemorate the "Illustrious Ninety-Two," members of the Massachusetts Bay House of Representatives who voted, in spite of peremptory orders from England, not to rescind the circular letter which they had sent to the assemblies of the other colonies and in which they urged united action against repressive measures of the Crown. The names of the Fifteen Sons of Liberty, the original owners, are en-

graved around the rim, and the descendant of one of these, Mrs. Marsden J. Perry, has lent the piece for this exhibition. In an adjacent case is shown a group of silver made by the two New York silversmiths, Peter Van Dyke (1680-1750) and his son, Richard, whose work was of very high quality. Two teapots lent by Pierre Jay and Francis P. Garvan, a porringer and a spoon lent by Luke Vincent Lockwood, two tankards lent by R. T. Haines Halsey, and one by Miss Abbie Estelle Jones, a can lent by Judge A. T. Clearwater, and two mugs lent by the First Presbyterian Church of Southampton, L. I., show the versatility of craftsmanship of the elder Van Dyke along lines characteristic of New York tradition. By Richard Van Dyke, the son, are the bowl with elaborately chased decoration, lent by R. T. Haines Halsey, and the can lent by Judge A. T. Clearwater, which is interesting in its great similarity to the adjacent piece by his father. In another case is a teapot made by Jacob Boelen (working after 1680). This has been lent by Pierre Jay. Its cover is of particular interest by reason of its similarity to the lids of the contemporary New York tankards in both design and decoration.

II. ENGLISH SILVER

The English silver shown in three cases in Gallery H 13 might easily escape the notice it deserves. There are two distinct groups—a collection of early English spoons, probably the finest in this country, and a case of representative pieces by Paul Lamerie, the famous London silversmith of the first half of the eighteenth century.

The latter group consists of an engraved silver and a pair of candlesticks lent by Mrs. Edward S. Harkness, and of two pieces lent by the Rev. Alfred Duane Pell, a tea caddy of grotesque Chinese design and a service plate with gadrooned border. Most striking, however, is the large hot water kettle, with stand and spirit lamp, lent by Mrs. Marsden J. Perry. This represents Lamerie's late style at its best, and at the same time reflects the popular rococo taste of the period, when elaborate chasing, engraving, modeling, and repoussé

had supplanted the simpler designs and plain surfaces of the Queen Anne period.

As different from the elaborate Lamerie silver as anything could be is the collection of early English spoons—twenty-three from the collection of Marsden J. Perry and six from the collection of Judge A. T. Clearwater. In England one might not be surprised to find in the hands of private collectors such rare and important specimens, for ever since the Rev. Thomas Staniforth began his collection there has been great interest in this branch of collecting; but in America it is most unexpected. Thirteen of these spoons, in fact, are from the Staniforth Collection, which was dispersed by sale in 1898. A complete set of fourteen apostle spoons dating from the time of Henry VII to Charles II includes several early examples: the Master spoon (1514), Saint Matthew (1504), Saint Jude and Saint Philip (1522 and 1528, respectively), and four others of the sixteenth century. There is also a Saint Paul spoon (1638), not ordinarily, of course, part of a set, but made occasionally in place of one of the apostles. All these are perfect specimens. In addition there are two apostle spoons—one Elizabethan and the other James I. Aside from apostle spoons, other important types are to be found: a diamond point top (about 1470), an acorn top, a seal top (1592), maiden head (1578), slipped stalk (1637), and two rare Puritan spoons (1652-1654). These loans are of the highest importance to one interested in English silver, and taken with the permanent exhibits of the Museum form an excellent outline of the development of this great craft.

III. LACE

In Gallery H 22, a group of cases exhibits laces and costumes dating from the early years to the middle of the nineteenth century. Here one may see dainty ball dresses that graced the dancers of New York's Assembly Ball in 1804, grouped with bonnets and blonde laces of the same period; the wedding dress and veil worn by Mrs. Rhodes, who was married in New York in 1835, and (on the opposite side of the room) two cases displaying black laces of French and Spanish fabric. In a central

case is a marvelous veil of Brussels lace bearing the crowned monogram of Marie Louise, second wife of Napoleon, which is lent by Mrs. William H. Moore.

In the adjoining gallery, H 17, a collection of tassels which occupies four cases attracts even the most casual visitor. These tassels represent an interesting branch of lace-making familiar in portraits of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when lace was an important accessory of male attire—cords and tassels being used to finish the large lace collars and to ornament the lace rosettes of the elaborate knee garters. In wall cases are beautiful cutwork and embroideries lent by Mrs. Albert Blum, Miss A. Miles Carpenter, Miss Marian Hague, and Mrs. Gino Speranza, and several exquisite ecclesiastical tassels lent by Mrs. DeWitt Clinton Cohen.

In Gallery H 18, the exhibit of Venetian rose point has been augmented by loans from Mrs. Bayard Cutting, Mrs. Harris Fahnestock, and Mrs. Edward Robinson. In the central case of this gallery may also be seen a *bas de rochet*, of Flemish bobbin lace, of the early eighteenth century, presented to the Museum by the Needle and Bobbin Club to commemorate the Museum's fiftieth anniversary.

To Gallery 19 has been assigned the display of laces from royal collections and nineteenth-century bridal laces, an exhibit made up from the permanent collection of the Museum and from laces lent by Mrs. Richard Gambrill, Mrs. Herbert Satterlee, and the Redmond family. Another special feature in this room is the rich display of point d'Alençon, lent by Mrs. Clarence Pell. Here is shown as well a loan from Mrs. Harry Payne Bingham, the bridal veil of Princess Margherita of Savoy, who married the Crown Prince Humbert (the late King of Italy) on April 22, 1868. Among the laces from royal collections should also be mentioned the delicate Brussels lace, lent by Mrs. Satterlee, with a charming design of laurel wreaths framing the monogram of Marie Louise, whose veil of the same fabric, lent by Mrs. Moore, is shown in Gallery H 22.

The most important piece of this char-

acter in the permanent collection is a recent accession displayed in the central case, a Brussels flounce worn by the Cardinal de la Fare, Duke and Peer of France, Archbishop of Sens and Auxerre, at the coronation of Charles X at Rheims, May 29, 1824, the most brilliant ceremonial that had been held in the cathedral since the crowning of Louis XIV. The flounce is bordered with a series of medallions in which a quatrefoil and a fleur-de-lis appear alternately as central motives surmounted by feathery palms from which rise graceful sprays of ecclesiastical flora—lilies, wheat heads, the grape vine, and fruit—framing the royal monogram, a crowned cipher of interlaced C's worked in needlepoint on a field *semé* with stars and fleurs-de-lis.

IV. MUSICAL MANUSCRIPTS AND BOOKS

Some interesting musical manuscripts and early printed books form a special exhibit in the galleries of musical instruments. Among the manuscripts one may see the original score of Handel's *Nisi Dominus* (Psalm CXXVI), arranged for five concerted violins, written by the composer in Rome in 1707 and bearing his signature; Beethoven's Sonata (Op. 96) for the piano and violin, composed toward the close of 1812, and first played at the house of Prince Lobkowitz in Vienna, on December 29 of the same year; four unpublished nocturnes of Paganini; and Mendelssohn's copy of the Bach *Kirchenkantaten*—seven church cantatas written in full score by a copyist, with an autograph of Mendelssohn. These manuscripts with the *Practica Musice* of Franchino Gafori, one of the first editions printed in Milan in 1496, the *Theorica Musice* (second edition) by the same author, printed in Milan in 1492, and the *Flores Musice* (second edition) of Hugo Reutlingensis, printed in Strassbourg about 1490, form a group of musical works of unusual rarity. Among several volumes lent by Harry Harkness Flagler should be noted the *Sémiramis*, *Tragédie Lyrique en 3 actes*, représentée pour le première fois au Théâtre des Arts, le 14 Floréal, An. 10—a souvenir of the grand opera of Napoleonic days.